



A Wild Place to Hike

One of the best outdoor activities to be found along northeastern Minnesota’s Gunflint Trail is recreational hiking – and it’s possible to do it spring, summer, fall, and winter. Chose your trail – from easy day hikes, to challenging multi-day routes for overnight camping. Trails meander through the Superior National Forest and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCAW), and include access to The Border Route and Superior Hiking Trail.

Wildlife

There are millions of reasons why we say the Gunflint Trail offers vacations of a different nature. Countless natural, wild, and scenic reasons. Moose, deer, loons, wolves, pine marten, black bears, eagles, owls, fox, lynx, beaver, otters, dozens of birds and other animals make up the wildlife in these north woods. Hundreds of species of songbirds, birds of prey, and waterfowl live in or migrate through this unique boreal habitat. Walleye, large and small mouth bass, lake trout, rainbow trout, and northern pike are the most prolific fish species. Come hike, explore, experience, and enjoy.

Trail Safety

Be prepared for rough and slippery surfaces, especially on ledge rock. Wear comfortable boots or a well-built jogging shoe with non-skid soles. Allow approximately 45 minutes per mile. Take along safety essentials: food and water for longer hikes, first aid kit, compass and detailed maps, sunscreen, and bug repellent. Always let someone know where you are headed and when you expect to return.

Leave No Trace

Help protect the thin soils and fragile plant life by staying on the main trail. Pack out everything you pack in. Take only pictures, leave only footprints.



218-387-2524
www.VisitCookCounty.com

Your Gunflint Trail Hosts

- Bearskin Lodge**
218-388-2292 • www.bearskin.com
- Big Bear Lodge & Cabins**
218-388-0172 • www.bigbearlodgemn.com
- Clearwater Canoe Outfitters & Lodge**
218-388-2254 • www.clearwaterhistoriclodge.com
- Cross River Lodge**
218-388-2233 • www.crossriverlodge.com
- Golden Eagle Lodge**
218-388-2203 • www.golden-eagle.com
- Gunflint Lodge**
218-388-2296 • www.gunflint.com
- Gunflint Northwoods Outfitters**
218-388-2296 • www.gunflintoutfitters.com
- Gunflint Pines Resort**
218-388-4454 • www.gunflintpines.com
- Heston’s Lodge**
218-388-2243 • www.hestons.com
- Hungry Jack Lodge**
218-388-2265 • www.hungryjacklodge.com
- Hungry Jack Outfitters**
218-388-2275 • www.hjo.com
- Loon Lake Lodge**
218-388-2232 • www.visitloonlake.com
- Nor’Wester Lodge**
218-388-2252 • www.norwesterlodge.com
- Poplar Creek Guesthouse**
218-388-4487 • www.poplarcreekbnb.com
- Poplar Haus**
218-388-2222 • www.poplarhaus.com
- Rockwood Lodge & Outfitters**
218-388-2242 • www.rockwoodbwca.com
- Seagull Creek Fishing Camp**
218-388-9929 • www.seagullcreekfishingcamp.com
- Seagull Canoe Outfitters**
218-388-2216 • www.seagulloutfitters.com
- Trail Center Lodge**
218-388-2214 • www.trailcenterlodge.com
- Trout Lake Resort**
218-387-1330 • www.troutlakeresort.com
- Tuscarora Lodge & Canoe Outfitters**
218-388-2221 • www.tuscaroracanoes.com
- Voyageur Canoe Outfitters**
218-388-2224 • www.voyageurcanoeoutfitters.com
- Way of the Wilderness Outfitters**
218-388-2212 • www.wayofthewilderness.com



Hiking on The Gunflint Trail Scenic Byway



1. SUPERIOR HIKING TRAIL

- Features:** Boreal and transition forest
Longest hiking trail in the Midwest
Spectacular Lake Superior overlooks
- Difficulty:** Moderate to difficult
- Distance:** 200+ miles
- Location:** Access from Pincushion Mountain trail system. Drive 2.5 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12); turn right on County Road 53.
- Hiking the Trail:** This long distance trail follows the Lake Superior shore from Two Harbors to the Canadian border. There are spectacular vistas of Lake Superior, silhouettes of the Sawtooth Mountain Range, and breathtaking glimpses of wild rivers as they cascade over waterfalls through rocky gorges. Trailheads are located at most County Road crossings and state parks. Current maps are available at U.S. Gunflint Ranger Station, state park offices, Information Center in Grand Marais, local resorts and businesses, and from the Superior Hiking Trail Association in Two Harbors, Minnesota.

1. PINCUSHION MOUNTAIN TRAILS

- Features:** Connections to Superior Hiking Trail
Lake Superior overlook
- Difficulty:** Easy to difficult
- Distance:** 15 miles (various loops)
- Location:** Drive 2.5 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12); turn right on County Road 53 and drive 0.2 miles to parking.
- Hiking the Trail:** The trailhead parking lot offers a great view of Lake Superior and the Grand Marais harbor. There are a variety of hikes possible within this looping system of trails. Take the trail to Pincushion Mountain for a view of the Devil Track River gorge and a panorama of Lake Superior. The Pincushion Trail System connects with the Superior Hiking Trail. Maps are available at trailhead and various locations along the trail.

Wilderness Permits

Permits are required to enter the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). **Self-issued day use permits are available at trailheads.** Overnight campers must have an entry point permit. Inquire at the Gunflint Ranger Station, 2020 West Highway 61, Grand Marais, MN, 55604, or call 218-387-1750 for more information.

For BWCAW overnight permit reservations, call 877-550-6777 or visit RECREATION.gov and type in: “Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness”

2. EAGLE MOUNTAIN

- Self-Issued BWCAW day permit required for hiking.*
Overnight permit (obtained at Gunflint Ranger Station office or outfitter) required for overnight stay at primitive campsite.
- Features:** Highest point in Minnesota (2,301 feet)
Spectacular vistas of BWCAW
Two campsites
- Difficulty:** Moderate with some steep and rocky terrain
- Distance:** 7 miles (round trip)
- Location:** Take the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12) from Highway 61 in Grand Marais 4.0 miles to County Road 8 on your left (toward Devil Track Lake). Turn left on County Road 8, drive 5 miles to County Road 27 and turn right. Drive 5 miles to the junction of Forest Road 170 and turn left. Follow #170 5 miles to the trailhead parking area.
- Hiking the Trail:** The first 2.5 miles of the trail gains elevation gradually; the next half mile offers slightly more increase and the final half mile becomes rocky and steep, gaining elevation rapidly to the summit. The highest point is marked by a brass survey disk placed toward the west side of the ridge.

3. WILDFLOWER INTERPRETIVE HIKE

- Features:** Wildflower interpretive signs
- Difficulty:** Easy
- Distance:** Less than a mile
- Location:** 5.7 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12) just before the Devil Track River bridge. Look for a small brown sign that says “Wildflower Sanctuary.”
- Hiking the Trail:** A shaded walk along the edge of the Devil Track River with an interesting variety of native and non-native wild flowers, shrubs, trees, and grasses

4. GEORGE WASHINGTON MEMORIAL PINES

- Features:** White and red pine forest
Wildflowers
- Difficulty:** Easy
- Distance:** 3 miles (round trip)
- Location:** 6.8 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12). Turn left into the parking lot.
- Hiking the Trail:** The trail is an old road through a tall pine stand. It turns at Elbow Creek and follows the creek before winding back into the forest. The trail can get wet and muddy during rainy periods.



5. KIMBALL LAKE FISHING TRAIL

- Features:** Designated trout lake
- Difficulty:** Easy
- Distance:** 2 miles
- Location:** 10.9 miles up the Gunflint Trail, then 2 miles east on Trout Lake Road (Forest Road 140).
- Hiking the Trail:** The trail starts at the Kimball Lake Campground and goes around the entire lake, and offers dozens of fishing spots cleared along the shoreline.

6. NORTHERN LIGHT LAKE BLUEBERRY HILL

- Features:** Panoramic view of Northern Light Lake
- Difficulty:** Difficult, but short
- Distance:** 1 mile (round trip)
- Location:** Drive 13 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12). The trail-head is 2.25 miles past Trout Lake Road.
- Hiking the Trail:** The top of Blueberry Hill offers outstanding vistas above Northern Light Lake. Or, hike a short distance down to the Brule River that flows into Northern Light Lake. NOTE: Portions of the trail have steep sections of exposed bedrock that can be difficult to cross when wet.



7. LIMA MOUNTAIN TRAIL

- Self-Issued BWCAW day permit required for hiking.*
Overnight permit (obtained at Gunflint Ranger Station or outfitter) required for overnight stay at primitive campsite.
- Features:** Beautiful vistas
Historic fire tower site
- Difficulty:** Difficult
- Distance:** 3 miles (round trip)
- Location:** Drive 21 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12). Turn left on Forest Road 152. Go 2 miles to Forest Road 315. Lima Mountain trailhead is located off Forest Road 315.
- Hiking the Trail:** The Lima Mountain Trail is narrow, rocky, and steep. Protruding rocks and roots make the footing difficult in places; be sure to wear good hiking shoes. Lima Mountain is the site of a former fire lookout tower (built in 1935, staffed until 1955, and removed in 1978). At the top of the mountain, at an elevation of 2,238 feet, there is a panoramic view to the west of the Misquah Hills, which also includes Eagle Mountain.



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8. MOOSE VIEWING TRAIL

Features: Wildlife viewing platform
Interpretive signs

Difficulty: Easy

Distance: 1 mile (round trip)

Location: 22.1 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12). Turn left and drive to the parking lot.

Hiking the Trail: Hike from the parking area for about a quarter mile along the snowmobile trail. The Moose Viewing Trail continues to the right, where it becomes a narrow path. The moose viewing platform is on the right, down a narrow trail through the woods. Watch for interpretive signs along the way to learn more about moose.



9. DANIELS LAKE

Self-Issued BWCAW day permit required for hiking.

Features: Access to Border Route Trail

Difficulty: Easy

Distance: 3.75 miles (round trip)

Location: Drive 27 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12). Turn right on Clearwater Road (County Road 22) and drive 4.3 miles to park at the West Bearskin Lake Boat Landing. Then walk 1 mile north on Clearwater Road to access the trailhead near the intersection with Lincoln Street and Petra Lane. You may also park at near-by Clearwater Lodge if you check in with the Clearwater staff.

Hiking the Trail: The trail follows the old Alger-Smith railroad grade which was acquired by the Northern Lumber Company to gain access to white pine holdings on Rose and Clearwater Lakes. The trail terminates at the Border Route Hiking Trail, along the "Long Portage" between Rose and Rove Lakes.

10. HONEYMOON BLUFF

Features: Scenic overlook
Perfect for viewing sunsets

Difficulty: Difficult but short

Distance: 1.5 miles (round trip)

Location: Drive 27 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12). Turn right on Clearwater Road (County Road 22) and travel 2.3 miles to the parking lot at the trailhead. (The trailhead is located 1/4 mile past the road to Flour Lake Campground.)

Hiking the Trail: This short trail with a long set of wooden stairs leads to a spectacular rocky overlook. Look out over Hungry Jack Lake, East Bearskin Lake, West Bearskin Lake, and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. The west-facing vantage point at the top is perfect for watching the sun set. Take extra care with small children on this trail and keep them under close supervision, due to the steep terrain and high cliffs.



11. CARIBOU ROCK TRAIL

Self-Issued BWCAW day permit required for hiking.

Overnight permit (obtained at Gunflint Ranger Station or outfitter) required for overnight stay at primitive campsite.

Features: Scenic overlook
Access to Border Route Trail

Difficulty: Difficult

Distance: 1.5 or 7 miles (round trip)

Location: Drive 28.7 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12). Turn right on Hungry Jack Lake Road (County Road 21) and go 1.9 miles to the parking area on the right; trailhead is on the left side of the road.

Hiking the Trail: The trail is an access route to the Border Route Hiking Trail. Overlooks along the hike include West Bearskin Lake (about 3/4 of a mile from trailhead), then Moss Lake, Duncan Lake, Rose Lake and Canada. The Stairway Falls are a highlight of this hike. This trail is steep and demanding, trail conditions are challenging with many protruding rocks and roots. Allow 5-7 hours for a round trip hike, and bring plenty of water, snacks, raingear, and bug repellent.

12. SOUTH LAKE TRAIL

Self-Issued BWCAW day permit required for hiking.

Overnight permit (obtained at Gunflint Ranger Station or outfitter) required for overnight stay at primitive campsite.

Features: Access to Border Route Trail
Beaver pond and wildlife

Difficulty: Moderate

Distance: 8 miles (round trip)

Location: Drive 31.8 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12). The trailhead sign is located about .1 mile past the Rockwood Lodge sign, on the north side of the Gunflint Trail.

Hiking the Trail: Extending from Poplar to South Lake, a portion of the trail is in the BWCAW. The trail passes near Partridge Lake which has a developed overnight campsite. Tall red and white pines watch over the trail in the sections where it passes through the old forests.



13. TOPPER LAKE TRAILHEAD/ MUCKER LAKE TRAIL

Self-Issued BWCAW day permit required for hiking.

Features: Access to Border Route Trail

Difficulty: Easy

Distance: 1.5 miles (round trip) or 6 miles to Mucker Lake

Location: Drive 33.9 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12). Turn right on Forest Road 317 and drive 0.6 miles to parking area at the end of the road.

Hiking the Trail: Topper Lake is nestled among hills. Mucker Lake Trail intersects the Border Route Trail at South Lake.

14. CRAB LAKE TRAIL

Self-Issued BWCAW day permit required for hiking.

Features: Access to Border Route Trail

Difficulty: Easy

Distance: 8 miles (round trip)

Location: Drive 38.1 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12). Turn right on the road to Loon Lake Lodge (County Road 51) and drive 0.9 miles to the trailhead, just past the lodge.

Hiking the Trail: This trail passes through wetlands, with a short spur to Crab Lake. Trail is often used as an access to the Border Route Trail.

15. GUNFLINT LAKE TRAILS

Features: Access to Border Route Trail
Interpretive signs on some trails
Spectacular vistas from overlooks

Difficulty: Moderate to difficult

Distance: 26 miles (various loops)

Location: Drive 44.7 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12) to South Gunflint Lake Road (County Road 20) which leads to the Gunflint Lake resorts. Pick up a local hiking map (and any current information on trail conditions) from one of the area resorts.

Hiking the Trails: The High Cliffs Trail and South Rim Trail have spectacular views of Gunflint Lake and the Canadian shore. Bridal Falls is a beautiful destination — just right for a picnic. Hike through dense growth between ridges, over lava outflows, and across the old Pee-Dee railroad bed. Hiking maps are essential. Pick one up from an area resort.

15. BORDER ROUTE

Self-Issued BWCAW day permit required for hiking.

Overnight permit (obtained at Gunflint Ranger Station or outfitter) required for overnight stay at primitive campsite.

Features: Long distance hike through the BWCA

Difficulty: Moderate to difficult

Distance: 70 miles

Location: Access from various points along the Gunflint Trail (Caribou Rock Trail, South Lake Trail, Topper Lake Trail, Crab Lake Trail, and Gunflint Lake Trails)

Hiking the Trail: The trail extends from a trailhead on the Gunflint Trail to the Pigeon River below South Fowl Lake. Most of the trail passes through the BWCAW. It's fairly rugged terrain, with many rock ledges and spectacular views. Windfalls are to be expected, and it may be difficult to follow the trail. Campsites can be found along lakeshores. For current trail conditions and maps, contact the USDA Forest Service in Grand Marais.

16. KEKEKABIC TRAIL

Self-Issued BWCAW day permit required for hiking.

Overnight permit (obtained at Gunflint Ranger Station or outfitter) required for overnight stay at primitive campsite.

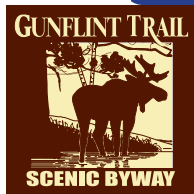
Features: Scenic ridges
Long-distance hike through the BWCAW

Difficulty: Moderate

Distance: 37 miles

Location: Drive 47.8 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12). Parking and trailhead are on the left.

Hiking the Trail: The trail extends from the Gunflint Trail to County Road 18 on Snowbank Lake near Ely. NOTE: In the fire-affected areas, it can be difficult to locate the trail; be sure to have a good trail map with you. Also, after high winds, large limbs and trees may criss-cross the trail. Use caution.



Gunflint Trail
(County Road 12)

17. CENTENNIAL TRAIL

Difficulty: Moderate

Distance: 3.3 miles

Location: Drive 47.8 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12) to the Kekekabic Trailhead. Parking and trailhead are on the left.

Hiking the Trail: The Centennial Trail follows the path and history of the Port Arthur, Duluth, & Western Railroad route to the ill-fated Paulsen Mine. A trail brochure and numbered posts guide hikers along the trail, retracing this historic attempt to extract iron ore from Northern Minnesota. Trail features include mine test pits, late 1800's stone trestles, and recent signs of fire and wind. Follow the Round Lake Road to the left (east) to the mowed snowmobile trail, walk to the Gunflint Trail, then walk the shoulder back to the Kekekabic Trailhead parking area.



18. MAGNETIC LAKE TRAIL

Self-Issued BWCAW day permit required for hiking.

Features: 60-foot rock with strong magnetic pull
Connects with Gunflint Lake trails

Difficulty: Easy

Distance: 3 miles (round trip)

Location: Drive 47.8 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12). Trailhead is on right.

Hiking the Trail: Hike across Larch Creek, through the burns of 2007, 2003 and 1974 to Magnetic Rock. Along the trail, look for rock cairns that mark the trail over areas of exposed rock. This 60-foot rock feature, with its strong magnetic attraction, is a unique phenomenon of the Glacial Period. Bring your compass and test the magnetism. Pick up a trail map at one of the Gunflint Lake area resorts if you want to hike past Magnetic Lake.



19. CHIK-WAUK MUSEUM & NATURE CENTER TRAILS

Features: Seven hiking trails, including an ADA trail and interpretive walk

Difficulty: Easy to moderate

Distance: Various

Location: Drive 54.7 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12) to Moose Pond Road (County Road 81). Turn right and watch for the sign for the Chik-Wauk Museum & Nature Center on your right (approximately 0.4 miles). Turn right and go to the parking area.

Hiking the Trails: A variety of seven trails surround the Chik-Wauk Museum and Nature Center. Pick up a trail map at the museum.

Contact: Chik-Wauk Museum & Nature Center
218-388-9915



20. NATURE TRAIL

Features: Wildflowers
Blueberries
Ham Lake Fire ecology

Difficulty: Moderate; some difficult spots

Distance: 1.6 miles (round trip)

Location: Drive 56.0 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail (County Road 12) to Trail's End Campground. The trail begins at the canoe landing.

Hiking the Trail: The trail winds up and down rocky terrain along the scenic bay which flows into the Seagull River (between Seagull and Gull Lakes). In spring and early summer, look for Stemless Moccasin Flower (pink moccasin flower) and Linnea Borealis (Twin Flower). In late July and August this is an excellent blueberry area. In late August into mid-September, mushrooms and other fungi are abundant on the forest floor (just for looking — not picking or eating!). Look and listen for Black-backed Woodpecker and several varieties of flycatchers along this trail.